

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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OUR OWN

God of the living, in whose eyes
Unveiled Thy whole creation lies,
All souls are Thine; we must not say
That those are dead who pass away,
From this our world of flesh set free;
We know them living unto Thee.

Released from earthly toil and strife,
With Thee is hidden still their life.
Thine are their thoughts, their works, their
powers,
All Thine, and yet most truly ours;
For well we know, where'er they be,
Our dead are living unto Thee.

Not spilt like water on the ground,
Not wrapped in dreamless sleep profound,
Not wandering in unknown despair
Beyond Thy voice, Thine arm, Thy care,
Not left to lie like fallen tree;
Not dead, but living unto Thee.

O Breather into man of breath,
O Holder of the keys of death,
O Giver of the life within,
Save us from death, the death of sin,
That body, soul, and spirit be
Forever living unto Thee!

—*John Ellerton.*

What does your anxiety do? It does not
empty tomorrow, brother, of its sorrow; but ah!
it empties today of its strength. It does not
make you escape the evil; it makes you unfit to
cope with it if it comes.—*I. Maclaren.*

Oh, to be able to keep back the quick words
that we so often speak, to suffer reproach and
indignity and keep silent! But we only attain
to this by constant vigilance, patience, and
prayer.

CHRISTIAN FAITH AS AN ADVENTURE

THE appeal to old-time religion is not a new
appeal in the history of mankind.

There never has been a time of spiritual or
moral transition when it was not heard.

The phrase itself means different things to dif-
ferent minds. To one group it means an old faith
long ago discarded. They are not interested in
anything of a period so far away.

Other persons hear the phrase with homesick,
pathetic longing. It speaks to them of days
when religion was fixed and certain, when faith
was secure, the mind established by declarations
of belief, and when problems of conduct were
solved.

They look upon the first group as on those who
have taken away the Lord, and they know not
where they have laid Him. They wish that we
might have the old-time gospel and once more
know safety.

What really was the old-time religion?

Suppose we interrogate history. We must look
for religion in lives that were vital and genuine,
for that is where we shall discern it.

Let us call Abraham to the witness stand.
Was his a religion in which all problems were
solved? Abraham will tell us that he knew a
religion that called him out of Ur of the Chaldees
to a land of which he had never heard. He
found the way long, and there was strife among
the herdmen, and there came a situation in
which his nephew, Lot, left him. Day after day,
he lived a life of seeking, groping, a great reality
always before him. Did he find life easy, com-
fortable, complacent?

What was the old-time religion of Moses? It
brought him back from the desert to lead his
people forty years and left him dying without
entrance into the promised land, though within
sight of it. Did he have all his problems quickly
solved?

What was the old-time religion of Elijah?
Did it bring him comfort and ease?

No; it drove him to live in moral and spiritual isolation. "I, even I only, am left." His questions were not all easily settled.

We have been talking of saints of the old régime. But we are Christians. What about the old-time religion of New Testament Christians?

Let us think of the old-time religion of Paul. What was the price he paid for it? "In labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep. In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the wilderness; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness."

That's what Paul paid for his religion. No one in Paul's day recognized it as old-time religion. They said that he had turned the world upside down. According to current ideas, he was destroying the faith. Fought by the Jews, suspected by the Christians, he had no religion in the eyes of his contemporaries except what was new, strange, original, and revolutionary.

But perhaps we shall find in the history of the Church a religion that leaves us at ease with all problems solved.

There is the religion of the Pilgrim Fathers. Think of John Robinson, their pastor. Listen to him, as he stands on the shore while they embark and gives them his blessing. He tells them that there is yet more light to break from God's word than they have yet seen.

Such is our search for old-time religion. Great examples of religious faith never give us a sense of complacency. They arouse question.

This is the result of our search for old-time religion: we find over and over again unsolved problems, unanswered questions, all kept going up to the end.

Now I come to the particular reason for this search. You will find marks of vital relationship from Abraham to men of our own day, great common qualities of the saints. If our generation, hungering for reality, wants to satisfy its hunger, perhaps in the great common religion of Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Paul, we may find our answer. I am concerned about the marks of vital religion. How may we identify it?

First it has the mark of an adventurous faith. It is strange how we misinterpret faith. It is not something back behind us concerned with the past. It concerns itself with the future. It is the substance of things hoped for. We should go forward to meet faith. Abraham looked forward to the promised land; Moses to the deliverance of Israel; Paul to the coming of the Lord; Wesley, to regenerated England; Drummond, to the conversion of all Anglo-Saxon youth. The ad-

ventures of all drove them out from ease and comfort.

Faith is not something to save; it saves us. It is nothing we have to defend; it defends us. It is no image moulded in the past, before which men must make obeisance and on which they are to hang garlands. It is a sword by which men carve their way to the citadels of imperialism and sensuality.

Faith is the one vital mark of religion. See what it can dare. The men we have followed were pioneers, adventurers. Their faith led them into the presence of an empowering God.

Men have gone back to places where saints once lived and there made images. But in days of old God spake to Moses, saying: "The place on which thou standest is holy ground."

"Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation." "This is the day that the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."

Saul, breathing forth threatenings and slaughter on the way to Damascus, meets Jesus; and religion is born in him, as God thus becomes his contemporary.

This is a mark of vital religion, a contemporary God, who calls us and loves us. If we have an adventurous faith and a contemporary God, it means that we shall live a sacrificial life.

All sacrifice is for efficiency. It is getting rid of things that keep us from seeing the great goal ahead. When we find adventurous faith, we find that men are living sacrificial life without knowing it.

Garibaldi's offer of hardship, wounds, and death met a ready response. Shackleton, about to set forth for the Antarctic, said that he had received many applications for every place he would fill. Men leap toward sacrifice when it holds adventure.

Men and women, we are summoned to this today—the adventure of the Christian faith, in the conviction that God is alive and speaking.

To believe that miracles of faith may be accomplished, that is yours for the asking. Never was there such adventure, never such romance as today. Faith never was more winning, more satisfying.

I think of a walk I took recently. We started on a hill, and, as we went down into the valley, there was little sunshine. But, by and by, we ascended again and looked back. The hills were light, though between them there was gloom.

Always in every generation there are clouds. It seems hard to find God. But, when a man has heard the call of faith, if he presses on as the years pass, he will look back to where he once stood and will see that it is bright. Great deeds were done. God was a reality. Light is on the hills because God himself was there.—*Rev. Justin W. Nixon, D.D.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB

Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 25 Fairmount Way, Quincy, Mass.
Tel. Granite 1140

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking "Shall I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it, else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you have sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send those to the Book Club to be printed here.

SPECIAL NOTICES

It will greatly aid those who are sending books, magazines, cards, and so forth, if all our correspondents who send requests for their children will take pains to mention their names and ages. Lacking such information, one is likely to make mistakes; for a boy of twelve and a girl of seven are not usually interested in the same things.

When requesting books for the first time, correspondents should always give, as reference, the name and address of their clergyman.

When correspondents move to a new address, notice should be sent either to our headquarters, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., or to those persons who have been sending books and magazines.

It is necessary to state positively that the Cheerful Letter Exchange is not a "clothing bureau" and not a "charitable" society in the usual sense of the word. We do not undertake to send correspondents money, clothing or household goods. Letters asking for that sort of assistance cannot receive attention. Letters not signed cannot be printed.

Many people do care for just the kind of friendly service for which we are organized. We limit our efforts to them and their wishes.

REQUESTS

1. My husband is a teacher. I have been a teacher and am interested in the progress of the young people of our community. We have two boys in school, one in the sixth grade and the other in the eighth. We live near the industrial town of Badin, but have no public library within reach. I shall appreciate everything that you can do for me. (Mrs.) E. E. Morgan, Palmerville, N. C.

2. I am a girl working my way through school to get an education. I live with my parents after school is closed. I would appreciate books or magazines, and reading for my mother. Mollie D. Perdeu, Preston, Va.

3. I would like Webster's Dictionary, and *Vanity Fair* by Thackeray. I am fond of good reading, but am not able to buy books at the present high prices. (Mrs.) L. C. Chandler, Nassawadot, Va.

4. I would appreciate some *American Magazines* and the books called *St. Elmo* and *The Top of the World*. I am a young girl in a strange place and sometimes get lonely, so I would be glad to have magazines and books. I have several copies of the *Ladies' Home Journal* that I would be pleased to give to anyone who may care for them, also two or three books for young boys. Minnie Lee Carlton, Crewe, Va.

5. I want to thank the *Cheerful Letter* friends for all the interesting reading matter they have sent me. I have gotten in touch with many, but there are some who have sent me papers without any return address; so I see no other way of letting them know what a great comfort they have been to me. Papers will be so welcome during the winter months. Any reading matter will be greatly appreciated. (Mrs.) J. D. Lewis, Williamsburg, Va.

6. George Price, Lenoir, N. C., acknowledges with thanks the magazines which he has received, and if not asking for too much he would appreciate a large print reference Bible.

7. Mrs. G. C. Foley, Roanoke, Va., R. 5, Box 61, living far from her own people and very lonely, will appreciate a correspondent and reading.

8. Mae Stuart, Jefferson, N. C., a girl of seventeen keeping house for her grandfather, who lives on a farm, and an uncle who is a cripple, finds life rather hard. She is fond of music, and asks for simple songs.

9. Mrs. Esther Hurley, Grassy Creek, N. C., R. 2, Box 75, seventy years of age and feeble, asks for reading for herself and husband. She will answer letters and appreciate them.

10. Mrs. Eva Henry, Athens, Tenn., R. 1 (care of Eliza Rayborn); the mother of five children, living on rented land, asks for a correspondent and good reading.

11. Mrs. Delia Brown, Crumpler, N. C., will be glad of reading for herself and three boys and three girls. She would also like crochet thread.

12. Mrs. Ben Hall, Woolwine, Va., R. 1, Box 44, living on a farm, mother of eight children, five of them at home, will be grateful for cards, quilt scraps and reading.

13. Mrs. T. V. Davis, Preston, Va., will appreciate a magazine or good book. She and her husband are young people who cannot afford to buy, but will greatly enjoy anything sent them.

14. Miss Martha Birge, Chelsea, Okla., R. 1, asks for a cook book and a Bible. She writes: "I am a poor farmer's daughter."

15. Mrs. Bessie Wright, Athens, Tenn., R. 1, a widow with four little ones, asks for a correspondent; the days are long and lonely while the children are at school.

The following correspondents cannot now be located. Mail sent to the addresses here given does not reach them.

Mrs. Gertrude Knight, Roosevelt, Okla.

Mrs. Della Eason, Charlotte, N. C.

Mrs. Ella Erbschloe, Goodwater, Mo.

Mrs. O. E. Thornburg, Houston, Texas.

THE POWER OF INTERCESSION

THE weary ones had rest; the sick had joy

That day, and wondered how.

(The ploughman, singing at his work, had prayed,

"God help them now.")

Alone in foreign lands, they wondered how

Their feeble word had power.

(At home, some Christians, two or three, had met

To pray an hour.)

So we are always wondering, wondering long,

Because we do not see

Someone, unknown perhaps and far away,

On bended knee.

—*Author unknown.*

A LAST WILL

HE was stronger and cleverer, no doubt, than other men, and in many broad lines of business he had grown rich. One morning in his office he directed a request to his confidential lawyer to

come to him in the afternoon. He intended to have his will drawn. A will is a solemn matter, even with men whose life is given up to business, and who are by habit mindful of the future. After giving this direction, he took up no other matter, but sat at his desk alone and in silence.

It was a day when summer was new. The pale leaves upon the trees were starting forth upon the still unbending branches. The grass in the parks had a freshness in its green like the freshness of the blue in the sky and of the yellow of the sun—a freshness to make one wish that life might renew its youth. The clear breezes from the south wanted about and then were still, as if loath to go finally away. Half idly, half thoughtfully, the rich man wrote upon the paper before him, beginning what he wrote with capital letters, such as he had not made since, as a boy at school, he had taken pride in his skill with the pen:—

IN THE NAME OF GOD, AMEN. I, Charles Lounsberry, being of sound and disposing mind and memory [he lingered on the word, "memory"], do now make and publish this MY LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT in order, as justly as I may, to distribute my interests in the world among succeeding men.

And first, that part of my interests which is known in the law and recognized in the sheep-bound volumes as my property, being inconsiderable and of none account, I make no account of it in this my will.

My right to live, it being but a life-estate, is not at my disposal; but, these things excepted, all else in the world I now proceed to devise and bequeath.

Item.—And first, I give to good fathers and mothers, but in trust for their children nevertheless, all good little words of praise and all quaint pet names, and I charge said parents to use them justly but generously as the needs of their children shall require.

Item.—I leave to children exclusively, but only for the life of their childhood, all and every, the dandelions of the fields and the daisies thereof, with the right to play among them freely, according to the custom of children, warning them at the same time against the thistles. And I devise to children the yellow shores of creeks and the golden sands beneath the waters thereof, with the dragon flies that skim the surface of said waters, and the odors of the willows that dip into said waters, and the white clouds that float high over the giant trees.

And I leave to children the long, long days to be merry in, in a thousand ways; and the night, and the moon, and the train of the Milky Way to wonder at, but subject, nevertheless, to the right hereinafter given to lovers. And I give to each child the right to choose a star that shall be his; and I direct the child's father to tell him the name

of it, in order that the child shall always remember the name of that star, after he has learned and forgotten astronomy.

Item.—I devise to boys jointly all the useful, idle field and commons where ball may be played, and all snow-clad hills where one may coast, and all streams and ponds where one may skate, to have and to hold the same for the period of their boyhood; and all meadows, with the clover blooms and butterflies thereof; and all woods, with their appurtenances of squirrels and whirring birds and echoes and strange noises; and all distant places which may be visited, together with the adventures there found, I do give to said boys to be theirs. And I give to said boys each his own place at the fireside at night, with all pictures that may be seen in the burning wood or coal, to enjoy without let or hindrance, and without any encumbrance of cares.

Item.—To lovers I devise their imaginary world, with whatever they may need, as the stars of the sky, the red, red roses by the wall, the snow of the hawthorn, the sweet strains of music, or aught else they may desire, to figure to each other the lastingness and beauty of their love.

Item.—To young men jointly, being joined in a brave, mad crowd, I devise and bequeath all boisterous, inspiring sports of rivalry. I give to them the disdain of weakness, and undaunted confidence in their own strength. Though they are rude and rough, I leave to them alone the power of making lasting friendships and of possessing companions; and to them exclusively I give all merry songs and brave choruses to sing, with smooth voices to troll them forth.

Item.—And to those who are no longer children or youths or lovers I leave Memory; and I leave to them the poems of Burns and Shakespeare and of other poets, if there are any others, to the end that they may live the old days over again freely and fully, without title or diminution; and to those who are no longer children or youths or lovers I leave, too, the knowledge of what a rare, rare world it is.—*Williston Fish.*

FOR HIM

HOLY offerings, rich and rare,
Offerings of praise and prayer,
Purer life and purpose high,
Claspèd hands, uplifted eye,
Lowly acts of adoration
To the God of our salvation,
On His altar laid, we leave them;
Christ, present them! God, receive them!

Homage of each humble heart,
Ere we from Thy house depart;
Worship fervent, deep and high,
Adoration, ecstasy;

All that childlike love can render
Of devotion true and tender,
On Thine altar laid, we leave them;
Christ, present them! God, receive them!
—*J. S. B. Monsell.*

SCENES FROM FAMOUS STORIES

THE TOURNAMENT, FROM SCOTT'S "IVANHOE"

IN England, seven or eight centuries ago, life was far less livable than it is now, but it did have its picturesque and romantic side. The more we know of the actual facts about affairs in those far-off days, the gladder we are that we have our chance now, instead of then. Plain common people, doing the commonplace work of the world, were not much considered then; the few who were rich and powerful had most of the good things and all the honors. The world has moved far since the days of which Sir Walter Scott wrote. And yet the grand noblemen and the fair ladies of great families themselves had not what we should regard as an easy life, for even their gayest sports were of a sort that kept every life in danger. The tournament of the knights, as the story-teller pictures it, had the beauty of a gorgeous show, with the stern reality of pain and peril always underneath the sport.

The scene was romantic. On the verge of a wood was an extensive meadow of the finest and most beautiful green turf, surrounded on one side by the forest, and fringed on the other with straggling oak trees. The ground sloped gradually down on all sides to a level bottom, enclosed for the occasion with strong palisades. The openings for the entry of the knights who were to try their skill were at the northern and southern ends, strong gates, each wide enough to admit two horsemen riding abreast. At each of these portals were stationed two heralds, attended by six trumpeters and a strong body of men-at-arms for maintaining order.

On a platform beyond the southern entrance, formed by a natural elevation of the ground, were pitched five magnificent tents. Before each one was hung the shield of the knight to whom it belonged. The central tent, as the place of honor, had been assigned to Brian de Bois-Guilbert, renowned in all games of chivalry. On one side of his tent were pitched those of Reginald Front-de-Bœuf and Richard de Malvoisin; on the other were the tents of Hugh de Grantmeslin and Ralph de Vipont. A sloping passage led from these tents down to the tournament field and was guarded by men-at-arms.

A part of the space around the edges of the field was made ready, with carpets and cushions for the ladies and knights who should look on. Other spaces were left for the crowd of people of

more ordinary sorts—a multitude sitting on the grassy ground; and hundreds more had climbed into the boughs of the surrounding trees.

One place in the very centre of the field's eastern side was raised higher than the rest and graced with a throne for Prince John. Opposite this, and even more gaily decorated, was a seat of honor to be occupied by some fair lady, chosen as Queen of Beauty and of Love; but no one as yet knew who would be chosen Queen. This time the choice was to be made not by the Prince and the nobles in advance, but by the knight who was victorious in the first day's contests.

"Let the fair sovereign's throne remain unoccupied until the conqueror shall be named,"—so one of the knights had urged,—“and then let him choose the lady by whom it shall be filled. It will add another grace to his triumph, and teach fair ladies to prize the love of valiant knights who can exalt them to such distinction.”

Prince John gave a signal to the herald to proclaim the rules of the tournament:

First, the five challengers were to be ready to encounter all comers.

Secondly, any knight might, if he pleased, select a special antagonist from among the challengers, by touching his shield. If he did so with the reverse of his lance, the trial of skill was made with what were called “the arms of courtesy”—that is, with lances at whose extremity a piece of round, flat board was fixed, so that no danger was encountered save by the shock of the horses and riders. But if the challenger's shield was touched with the sharp end of the lance, the combat was to be with sharp weapons, as if in actual battle.

Thirdly, when the knights present had each broken five lances, the Prince was to declare the victor in this first day's tourney, who should receive as prize a war-horse of exquisite beauty and matchless strength; and in addition he should have the honor of naming the Queen of Love and Beauty, by whom the prize should be given on the following day.

Fourthly, on the second day there should be a general tournament in which all the knights present might take part, fighting it out manfully until the Prince should give the signal to cease; and the Queen of Love and Beauty was then to crown the knight who had borne himself best with a coronet of gold in the shape of a laurel crown.

The galleries were now crowded with spectators—all the noble and great, the rich and beautiful in that part of England. And the space where the knights waited, on horseback, was a sea of waving plumage, glistening helmets, and tall lances, some of the lances gay with brightly-colored pennants that fluttered and danced in the breeze.

At the flourish of the clarions and trumpets,

the five challenging knights rode down into the lists and the men who were to oppose them advanced to the encounter. Three of those who came forward at full gallop soon rolled on the ground. One broke his lance not on the helmet or on the shield of his opponent as the rules of the tourney required, but against the armored body of a challenger; and that was held disgraceful, as showing that he had but clumsy command either of his horse or of his own strength. In one case the opposing horsemen were evenly matched, for each splintered the other's lance.

A second group rode out to meet the challengers, but the advantage still remained with these latter, for not one of them failed in the charge or was unhorsed. And again the test was made, but with the same fortune. There came a pause. Who would venture against such proven skill?

The heralds shouted the opportunity. “Loves of ladies! Splintering of lances! Stand forth, gallant knights, for fair eyes look upon your deeds!”

There was the sound of a single trumpet from the far end of the lists, and all turned to see who could be the new champion.

He rode out into the open space, mounted on a gallant black horse. His suit of armor was of steel, richly inlaid with gold, and the device on his shield was a young oak tree pulled up by the roots, with one Spanish word for a motto, *Desdichado*, signifying “The Disinherited.” The dexterity with which he managed his steed and something of youthful grace which he displayed in his manner won him the favor of the multitude.

The champion rode on the whole length of the field and straight up the slope to the central tent of Brian de Bois-Guilbert. There he struck the shield with the point of his long lance—struck it till it rang again. All were amazed and none more than the proud owner.

“Take your place,” he said sternly to the stranger, “and look your last upon the sun.”

“Thanks for the courtesy,” replied the Disinherited Knight. “I advise thee to take a fresh horse and a new lance, for by mine honor both will be needed.”

Brian de Bois-Guilbert mounted a fresh horse and chose a new, tough spear. And soon the two champions stood facing each other from the far opposite ends of the ground. The trumpets gave the signal. The horsemen flew toward each other with the speed of lightning and met midway with the shock of a thunderbolt. The lances were splintered up to the very grasp, and it seemed at the moment that both knights had fallen, for the shock had made each horse recoil backward on its haunches. But the riders recovered their steeds by use of the bridle and spur; and, having glared on each other for an instant with eyes that

seemed to flash fire through the bars of their visors, each turned about; they retired to the opposite ends of the lists, and received fresh lances from the attendants.

A loud shout from the spectators, waving of scarfs and handkerchiefs, and general acclamations showed that this was the most equal encounter of the day. But no sooner had the knights resumed their station than the clamor of applause was hushed into silence, so deep it seemed as if the multitude were afraid even to breathe.

In the second encounter the Templar aimed his lance at the very centre of his antagonist's shield, and struck it so fair and forcibly that his spear went to shivers, while the Disinherited Knight reeled in his saddle. That champion had at the beginning directed the point of his own lance toward Bois-Guilbert's shield, but, changing his aim almost in the moment of encounter, he addressed it to the helmet—a mark more difficult to hit. Fair and true he hit the Norman on the visor. Even at this disadvantage, the Templar sustained his high reputation, and, had not the girths of his saddle burst, he might not have been unhorsed. As it chanced however, saddle, horse, and man rolled on the ground under a cloud of dust.

To extricate himself from the stirrups and the fallen steed was to the Templar scarce the work of a moment. Stung with madness at his disgrace, he drew his sword and waved it in defiance of his conqueror. The Disinherited Knight sprang from his own steed and also drew his sword. But the marshals of the field rode in between them and reminded them that the laws of the present tournament did not permit at present that kind of encounter:

"We shall meet again," said the Templar.

"If we do not," said the Disinherited Knight, "the fault shall not be mine."

The victor was besought to remove his helmet or at least to lift his visor before they conducted him to the Prince to receive the prize; but he declined to do so, saying that he could not at this time suffer his face to be seen. But Prince John was displeased.

"This knight hath been disinherited of his courtesies as well as of his lands, since he desires to appear before us without uncovering his face. Wot ye, my lords, who this gallant can be that bears himself thus proudly?"

But no one knew the mysterious stranger.

The prize was presented—a superb horse, led by two grooms, richly dressed. Laying one hand upon the pommel of the saddle, the Disinherited Knight vaulted at once upon the back of the steed, without making use of the stirrup, and, brandishing aloft his lance, rode twice around the lists. As he rode around the second time, the Prince made a sign for him to pause. The

Knight turned his horse toward the throne, and, sinking his lance until the point was within a foot of the ground, remained motionless as an equestrian statue.

"Sir Disinherited Knight," said Prince John, "since that is the only title by which we can address you, it is now your duty and privilege to name the fair lady who as Queen of Honor and of Love is to preside over the next day's festival. Raise your lance."

The Knight obeyed, and Prince John placed upon its point a coronet of green satin, having around its edge a circlet of gold. And then, pacing forward as slowly as he had hitherto rode swiftly around the lists, he seemed to exercise his right of examining all the fair faces which adorned that splendid circle.

At length he paused beneath the balcony in which the Lady Rowena was placed, and the expectation of the onlookers was excited to the utmost. Whether from indecision or from some other motive, the champion of the day waited a full minute, while the eyes of the silent audience were riveted upon him. Then, gradually and gracefully sinking the point of his lance, he deposited the coronet at the feet of the fair Rowena.—*Adapted from Scott.*

TODAY

SURE, this world is full of trouble;

I ain't said it ain't.

Lord! I've had enough an' double

Reason for complaint.

Rain an' storm have come to fret me,

Skies were often gray,

Thorns an' brambles have beset me

On the road—but, say,

Ain't it fine today?

What's the use of always weepin',

Makin' trouble last?

What's the use of always keepin'

Thinkin' of the past?

Each must have his tribulation,

Water with his wine;

Life—it ain't no celebration;

Trouble? I've had mine;

But today is fine.

It's today that I am livin',

Not a month ago.

Havin', losin', takin', givin',

As time wills it so.

Yesterday a cloud of sorrow

Fell across the way.

It may rain again tomorrow;

It may rain—but, say,

Ain't it fine today!

—*Douglas Malloch.*

A TALE FROM AN OLD BOOK

At different times, in different moods, we naturally read our Bibles with quite different purposes. One day we may most want some story of the Master in Galilee or in Jerusalem. Another day it may be some prayer in the form of a Psalm that fits our need. Some days the sublime poetry of Job and Isaiah seems to us the noblest that ever was written. Perhaps we do not often enough realize the wonderful beauty of many parts of the Bible. The translation from Hebrew and Greek into English that was made in England in the time of King James is still a treasury of beauty as well as of religious meaning. For just one example, this story of King David and the end of an attempted revolution in the kingdom has been declared by critics to be one of the most perfect things in the whole range of the English language. It is from the eighteenth chapter of the second Book of Samuel. Troops are sent out against the rebel army, and it is likely that the king's own son, Absalom, the leader of the revolt, will be captured. There is an exquisitely true touch of human nature in the volunteer messenger who thought he would take pride in carrying the news, but who, in face of a heart about to break, could not speak the whole message.

And David numbered the people that were with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them. And the king said unto the people, I will surely go forth with you, myself also.

But the people answered, Thou shalt not go forth, for if we flee away they will not care for us; neither if half of us die will they care for us; but now thou art worth ten thousand of us; therefore it is better that thou succour us out of the city.

And the king said unto them, What seemeth to you best I will do. And the king stood by the gate-side, and all the people came out by hundreds and by thousands. And the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom.

So the people went out into the field against Israel, and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim. And Absalom met the servants of David. And ten young men that bare Joab's armour compassed about and smote Absalom and slew him.

And Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing after Israel.

Then said Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, Let me now run and bear the king tidings how that the Lord hath avenged him of his enemies. And Joab said unto him, Thou shalt not bear tidings this day, but thou shalt bear tidings another day;

but this day thou shalt bear no tidings, because the king's son is dead.

Then said Joab to Cushi, Go tell the king what thou hast seen. And Cushi bowed himself unto Joab and ran. Then said Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, again to Joab, Let me, I pray thee, also run after Cushi. Then Ahimaaz ran by way of the plain and overran Cushi.

And David sat between the two gates. And the watchman went up to the roof over the gate of the wall, and lifted up his eyes and looked; and, behold, a man running alone. And the watchman cried and told the king. And the king said, There are tidings in his mouth.

And the watchman saw another man running; and the watchman called unto the porter and said, Behold, another man running alone.

And the king said, He also bringeth tidings.

And the watchman said, Methinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok. And the king said, He is a good man, and cometh with good tidings.

And Ahimaaz called and said unto the king, All is well. And he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king and said, Blessed be the Lord thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king.

And the king said, Is the young man Absalom safe?

And Ahimaaz answered, When Joab sent the king's servant and me thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was.

And the king said unto him, Turn aside, and stand here. And he turned aside and stood still.

And, behold, Cushi came. And Cushi said, Tidings, my lord the king. For the Lord hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee.

And the king said unto Cushi, Is the young man Absalom safe?

And Cushi answered, The enemies of my lord the king and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is.

And the king went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And as he went, thus he said: O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

Do right, and God's recompense to you will be the power of doing more right. Give, and God's reward to you will be the spirit of giving more. Love, and God will pay you with the capacity of more love; for love is Heaven—love is God within you.

Let no man turn aside, ever so slightly, from the broad path of honour on the plausible pretence that he is justified by the goodness of his end. All good ends can be worked out by good means. Those that cannot are bad, and may be counted so at once and left alone.

JOHN GILPIN'S RIDE

Boys and girls who take their turn at laughing
 over Gilpin's wedding anniversary may need to
 have a few parts of the funny old story explained.
 When the verses were written it was the fashion
 for every man of dignity to wear a wig; without
 it he would have felt like a man today who
 forgets to put on a necktie. A linen draper's
 shop in England is what we call a dry-goods
 store. A calender was a cloth-finisher. The
 two men must have known each other in business.

JOHN GILPIN was a citizen
 Of credit and renown;
 A train-band captain eke was he
 In famous London town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear,
 "Though wedded we have been
 These twice ten tedious years, yet we
 No holiday have seen.

"Tomorrow is our wedding-day,
 And we will then repair
 Unto the 'Bell' at Edmonton,
 All in a chaise and pair.

"My sister and my sister's child,"
 Myself, and children three
 Will fill the chaise; so you must ride
 On horseback after we."

He soon replied: "I do admire
 Of womankind but one,
 And you are she, my dearest dear;
 Therefore it shall be done.

"I am a linen-draper bold,
 As all the world doth know,
 And my good friend, the Calender,
 Will lend his horse to go."

The morning came; the chaise was brought,
 Where they did all get in,
 Six precious souls, and all agog
 To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip! Round went the wheels;
 Were never folk so glad.
 The stones did rattle underneath
 As if Cheapside were mad.

John Gilpin, at his horse's side,
 Seized fast the flowing mane,
 And up he got, in haste to ride—
 But soon came down again;

For saddle-tree scarce reached had he
 His journey to begin,
 When, turning round his head, he saw
 Three customers come in.

So down he came, for loss of time,
 Although it grieved him sore,
 Yet loss of pence, full well he knew,
 Would trouble him much more.

Now see him mounted once again
 Upon his nimble steed,
 Full slowly pacing o'er the stones,
 With caution and good heed.

But finding soon a smoother road,
 Beneath his well-shod feet,
 The snorting beat began to trot,
 Which galled him in his seat.

So "Fair and softly!" John he cried,
 But John he cried in vain;
 That trot became a gallop soon
 In spite of curb and rein.

So, stooping down, as needs he must
 Who cannot sit upright,
 He grasped the mane with both his hands
 And eke with all his might.

The horse, who never in that sort
 Had handled been before,
 What thing upon his back had got
 Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck-or-nought;
 Away flew hat and wig;
 He little dreamed, when he set out,
 Of running such a rig.

The wind did blow, his cloak did fly,
 Like streamer long and gay,
 Till, loop and button failing both,
 At last it flew away.

The dogs did bark; the children screamed;
 Up flew the windows all,
 And every soul cried out, "Well done!"
 As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—who but he?
 His fame soon spread around;
 "He carries weight!" "He rides a race!"
 "'Tis for a thousand pound!"

And then, as fast as he drew near,
 'T was wonderful to view
 How in a trice the turnpike men
 Their gates wide open threw.

At Edmonton his loving wife
 Down from the balcony spied
 Her tender husband, wondering much
 To see how he did ride.

"Stop, stop, John Gilpin! Here's the house!"
 They all aloud did cry.
 "The dinner waits, and we are tired;"
 Said Gilpin, "So am I!"

But yet the horse was not a whit
Inclined to tarry there;
For why? His owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

Away rode Gilpin, out of breath
And sore against his will,
Till at his friend the Calender's
The horse at last stood still.

The Calender, amazed to see
His neighbor in such trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
And thus accosted him:—

“What news? What news? Your tidings tell;
Tell me you must and shall—
Say why bare-headed you are come,
Or why you come at all?”

“I come because your horse would come;
And, if I well forebode,
My hat and wig will soon be here—
They are upon the road.”

Then, turning to the horse, he said,
“I am in haste to dine.
’Twas for your pleasure you come here,
You shall go back for mine.”

Ah, luckless speech and bootless boast!
For them he paid full dear.
For, while he spake, a braying ass
Did sing most loud and clear,

Whereat the horse did snort, as he
Had heard a lion roar,
And galloped off with all his might,
As he had done before.

Now Mrs. Gilpin, when she saw
Her husband posting down
Into the country far away,
Had pulled out half a crown;

And thus unto the youth she said,
That drove them to the “Bell,”
“This shall be yours when you bring back
My husband, safe and well.”

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
John coming back amain;
Whom in a trice he tried to stop
By catching at his rein.

But, not performing what he meant
And gladly would have done,
The frightened steed he frightened more
And made him faster run.

Six gentlemen upon the road
Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With post-boy scampering in the rear,
They raised a hue and cry:—

“Stop thief! Stop thief!” “A highwayman!”
Not one of them was mute;
And all and each that passed that way
Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike gates again
Flew open in short space,
The toll-men thinking, as before,
That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did; and won it too,
For he got first to town,
Nor stopped till where he had got up
He did again get down.

Now let us sing, Long live the King!
And Gilpin, long live he!
And when he next doth ride abroad,
May I be there to see.

—(Abridged from Cowper.)

SOME GOOD OLD CONUNDRUMS

(See last page for answers)

1. What has teeth, but never uses them in eating?
2. Why is the letter A like twelve o'clock?
3. What is it that a man never has, himself, and yet can give to a woman?
4. Why is a selfishly sentimental person like the letter P?
5. What is most like half an orange?
6. When is a rose like a book?

THE REAL REASON

With never a word she passed me by,
With never a look or sign;
She silently went her way, and I
As silently went on mine.

No one would have dreamed who saw her face
As we so coldly met,
That her heart was touched by the faintest trace
Of memory or regret.

And few, I think, who stood apart
And watched my tranquil brow
Would have guessed that the memory stirred my
heart
Of a faithless, broken vow.

And they need n't have guessed or wondered, you
see;

For this is the reason why—
I didn't know her, and she didn't know me,
And so she passed me by!

—Anonymous.

ANSWERS TO CONUNDRUMS

1. A comb.
2. Because it is the middle of the d-a-y.
3. A husband.
4. Because he is first in pity and last in help.
5. The other half.
6. When its leaves are red (read).

If you wish to be miserable, think about your self, about what you want, what you like, what respect people ought to pay you; and then to you nothing will be pure. You will spoil everything you touch, you will make misery for yourself out of everything which God sends you; you will be as wretched as you choose.

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE

ITS PURPOSE

To cheer and comfort those who are ill, lonely, or discouraged, through the exchange of letters and by gifts of books and magazines.

To help those who live far from schools, or who wish to continue their studies by means of correspondence with a teacher.

To give to those living far from church some of the helps which churches give. One good sermon or similar article is printed in each number. These sermons are never doctrinal, but present only such simple religious truths and principles as are agreed on by all churches.

WHERE TO WRITE

1. *Letters paying for subscriptions to the paper*, fifty cents a year, should be sent to the Cheerful Letter Exchange, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Checks or postal orders should be made payable to the Cheerful Letter Exchange.

2. *Letters asking for correspondents, for books, magazines, cards, etc.*, also *letters offering to give books, magazines, etc.*, should be sent to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 25 Fairmount Way, Quincy, Mass.

See special suggestions under the heading of the "Book and Magazine Club" in this number.

3. *Letters asking for help in studying at home* should be sent to Mrs. George O. Sands, Brimble Ave., North Beverly, Mass.

The Home Study Committee has on hand a variety of schoolbooks which may be used by students either at home or in the schoolroom. The aim of the teachers is to help in any study where help is needed. Often this may fit a person for a higher grade of work.

4. *Letters about the establishment of Circulating Libraries* should be sent to Mrs. H. A. Stevens, 26 John St., Brookline, Mass.

A Circulating Library will be started in any small community needing one, if proper location and care can be furnished and satisfactory references can be given. One hundred and fifty-nine libraries are now on our lists.

5. The Secretary of the Cheerful Letter Exchange, Miss Ethel L. Hersey, Hingham, Mass., should receive the more general correspondence from workers on the local committees, or from others interested in the organization and its methods.

Notice to those who give:—

Only books of an instructive or wholesomely amusing character should be offered. Classics, educational works, and standard novels and magazines are always acceptable.

There is a large call for scraps of calico, gingham, and percale for patchwork.

To those who receive:—

It is a rule of the Cheerful Letter Exchange that no one ask for money or for clothing in the columns of this paper. The name of any person who fails to obey this rule will be dropped from our list. Any worker receiving such a request should send the letter at once to headquarters.

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